WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1. A computer implemented method for optimizing a schedule of legs employed in transporting objects between geographic markets, the method comprising the steps of:
 - identifying a set of itineraries for serving each market in a set of markets, each itinerary comprising one or more legs;
 - b) generating a set of market plans for each market, each market plan comprising a modified set of the itineraries for the market;
 - c) determining the profitability of each market plan; and
 - d) selecting from the set of market plans a subset optimizing overall profit of the schedule.
- 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the generating step includes the substeps of:
 - a) changing a status parameter of one of the itineraries in the set of itineraries while leaving the status parameters for the remaining itineraries unchanged; and
 - b) repeating said changing step for each itinerary in the set.
- 3. The method of claim 1, wherein market plans are generated utilizing itineraries including at least one leg from a specified service provider.

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- 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step employs a profitability model.
- 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step employs a mixed integer program to select the subset of market plans to maximize overall profit of the schedule.
- 6. The method of claim 1, further including the step of evaluating a termination condition to determine whether additional market plans will be generated using the subset of market plans.
- 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the identifying step includes the substep of generating the set of itineraries based on at least scheduled legs and automatically-generated hypothetical legs of a specified service provider.

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- 8. A system including one or more computers executing applications for optimizing a schedule of legs employed in transporting objects between geographic markets, the system comprising:
 - a) a component configured to identify a set of itineraries for serving each market in a set of markets, each itinerary comprising one or more legs;
 - b) a component configured to generate a set of market plans for each market, each market plan comprising a modified set of the itineraries for the market;
 - c) a profitability model configured to determine the profitability of each market plan; and
 - d) a mixed integer program configured to select from the set of market plans a subset optimizing overall profit of the schedule.
- 9. The system of claim 8, wherein the component configured to generate a set of market plans is further configured to:
 - a) change a status parameter of one of the itineraries in the set of itineraries while leaving the status parameters for the remaining itineraries unchanged; and
 - b) repeat said changing step for each itinerary in the set.
- 10. The system of claim 8, wherein market plans are generated utilizing itineraries including at least one leg from a specified service provider.

- 11. A computer program product having computer readable instructions for programming a computer to optimize a schedule of legs employed in transporting objects between geographic markets, by performing the steps of:
 - a) identifying a set of itineraries for serving each market in a set of markets, each itinerary comprising one or more legs;
 - b) generating a set of market plans for each market, each market plan comprising a modified set of the itineraries for the market;
 - c) determining the profitability of each market plan; and
 - d) selecting from the set of market plans a subset optimizing overall profit of the schedule.
- 12. The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the generating step includes the substeps of:
 - a) changing a status parameter of one of the itineraries in the set of itineraries while leaving the status parameters for the remaining itineraries unchanged; and
 - b) repeating said changing step for each itinerary in the set.
- 13. The computer program product of claim 11, wherein market plans are generated utilizing itineraries including at least one leg from a specified service provider.

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- 14. The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the determining step employs a profitability model.
- 15. The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the selecting step employs a mixed integer program to select the subset of market plans to maximize overall profit of the schedule.
- 16. The computer program product of claim 11, further including the step of evaluating a termination condition to determine whether additional market plans will be generated using the subset of market plans.
- 17. The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the identifying step includes the substep of generating the set of itineraries based on at least scheduled legs and automatically-generated hypothetical legs of a specified service provider.

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